

Transactions

OCTOBER 2003

TRANSPORTATION NEWS
FOR THE NINE-COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



Invitation

Carquinez Bridge Celebration



BILL HALL - CALTRANS

Drivers along Interstate 80 have been treated to tantalizing views of a stunning new bridge rising from the waters of the Carquinez Strait over the last three years. Now you can be one of the first people to cross the new span by coming to a celebration scheduled for Saturday, November 8, 2003, marking the completion of the Bay Area's first new suspension bridge in seven decades. In addition to the ribbon-cutting and inaugural bridge walk, celebration organizers are planning a fireworks display and a street fair in the adjacent town of Crockett. In conjunction with the festivities, MTC is hosting an exhibit of dramatic bridge construction photos by Caltrans photographer Bill Hall.

Photo Exhibit: Bridging the Strait

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street, 3rd Floor, Oakland
November 12, 2003 – January 30, 2004
10 am to 4 pm weekdays
For special viewing arrangements, contact
Brenda Kahn:
Phone – 510.464.7773
E-mail – bkahn@mtc.ca.gov

For details on the celebration, stay tuned to MTC's Web site at <www.mtc.ca.gov>, or go to the Web site for the Al Zampa Memorial Bridge (the new span's official name): <www.alzbridge.com>.

News Flash: 511 Honored

The American Public Transportation Association honored the region's 511 Traveler Information System with the Innovation Award at its annual meeting in September, calling the service "a model for other systems across the country."



JOHN BLAUSTEIN

Engineered by a consortium involving ERG Ltd. and Motorola Inc., TransLink® is slated to go regionwide, allowing riders to use a single card for all their trips.

TransLink® Smart Card Expands Its Reach

SIX AGENCIES TO INSTALL EQUIPMENT ALONG ENTIRE NETWORKS

Twenty months, more than 4,000 cards and over a half-million transactions later, the verdict is unanimous — TransLink® is a winner! Each of the six transit agencies that began testing the MTC-sponsored smart card fare-payment program in February 2002 has now signed on for Phase 2 and will install TransLink® equipment system-wide. AC Transit, Golden Gate Transit and Caltrain were the first to climb aboard the expansion bandwagon, and were joined in September by Santa Clara County's Valley Transportation Authority, San Francisco Muni and BART.

(continued top of next column)

511 Phone Service Logs Millionth Call

Mikal Mekki calls 511 every morning, sometimes more often, to check on Bay Area traffic conditions. So the odds were good that the millionth call to the region's popular, toll-free travel information service would come from his cell phone. Sure enough, when the meter clicked past the million-call mark on a Tuesday morning in mid-September, Mekki was on the other end of the line.

"I live in my car," said the 29-year-old San Leandro resident, whose work as an independent sales associate for Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. takes him throughout the Bay Area and beyond. "I



PETER DEELER

A call a day — and sometimes several — to 511 keeps traffic congestion at bay for Mikal Mekki.

might be driving to the South Bay one day, into San Francisco the next, or out to Antioch or Stockton. The day 511 rolled over one million, I was calling to check traffic on the bridges before going to an appointment in San Francisco.

"The voice activation is really sharp," Mekki continued, pointing

After proving its mettle on everything from buses and ferries to BART and light rail, TransLink® still had to navigate a few political hurdles — a process capped by a crucial BART Board of Directors action on September 25.

"Phase 2 really solidifies the regional vision for TransLink®," said MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger. "Together, these six agencies carry the vast majority of all Bay Area transit riders, cover a territory that stretches from Santa Rosa to Gilroy and east to Pittsburg/Bay Point and Dublin/Pleasanton, and connect with nearly every other transit system in the region."

Phase 2 officially will kick off in the spring of 2004 as TransLink® card readers begin snapping into place throughout Golden Gate Transit's bus fleet (the ferry terminals were equipped during the pilot phase). The expansion will continue over the ensuing months as equipment is installed throughout the other five agencies' networks. TransLink® will be extended to the region's remaining transit operators beginning in 2005.

Thanks to an embedded microchip that can store multiple fares, the TransLink® card allows transit riders to easily transfer among participating systems. It also eliminates the hassles of scrounging for change or coaxing threadbare bills into balky machines. A convenient autoloading option allows riders to link their TransLink® card to a checking or credit card account.

"Using TransLink® makes my experience more convenient," commented Daketima Briggs of Cupertino, a participant in the TransLink® pilot program. "I need to carry less cash and it saves time."

As Phase 2 picks up steam, TransLink® cards will be widely available to transit riders through retailers, transit agencies, employers and the Web. — John Goodwin

For more information: <www.translink.org>.

out one of the key differences between 511 and the Bay Area's previous travel information number, which required callers to navigate through a push-button choice menu. "I love high-tech gadgetry, and this is so easy that my son, who is 6, and my daughter, who is 4, can call out the freeway numbers for me while I'm driving. They like it so much that sometimes they argue over who gets to talk to 511."

Mekki said that 511 helps him use his time more efficiently. "The fact that the information is real-time allows me to make decisions about which way to go. It's accurate. It's on time. And it's always available." — John Goodwin

Calendar

WEDNESDAY

OCTOBER 29, 2003

1 pm

Hotel Sofitel
223 Twin Dolphin Drive, Redwood City
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Workshop

THURSDAY

OCTOBER 30, 2003

9:30 am

Palace Hotel
2 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Workshop

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 6, 2003

10 am

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee

6 pm

Ulatas Community Center, Rooms A/B
1000 Ulatas Drive, Vacaville

Public Hearing

Unmet transit needs in Solano County

For information on riding public transit to the meeting or commenting in writing, visit MTC's Web site.

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 7, 2003

10 am

Alameda County Congestion
Management Agency
1333 Broadway, Suite 220, Oakland
Partnership Board*

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 12, 2003

9:30 am

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Administration Committee*

10 am

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Bay Area Toll Authority
Oversight Committee*

10:30 am

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Programming and Allocations Committee*

12:30 pm

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
MTC Advisory Council

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 13, 2003

7 pm

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Planning and Operations Committee*
Note: Special evening meeting to accommodate
public input to the Transportation 2030 Plan

MONDAY

NOVEMBER 17, 2003

1:30 pm

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Partnership Technical Advisory Committee

TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 18, 2003

3:30 pm

MetroCenter, Conference Room 171
Minority Citizens Advisory Committee

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 19, 2003

10 am

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Bay Area Toll Authority*

10:10 am

MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Metropolitan Transportation Commission*

* Webcast on <www.mtc.ca.gov>

Note: Dates, times and locations of MTC meetings may change. Please confirm by calling 510.464.7787. Agendas, updated meeting schedules and packets for MTC standing committees are posted on MTC's Web site: <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

Workshop

What Will the Bay Area
Look Like in 2030?

Come find out at a free workshop

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 22, 2003

9:30 am to 1:30 pm

Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum
734 Main Street
(Vallejo's former City Hall)
Transportation 2030 Public Forum

Lunch included. Seating is limited.

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters
Education Fund as part of the public outreach
for MTC's Transportation 2030 Plan.

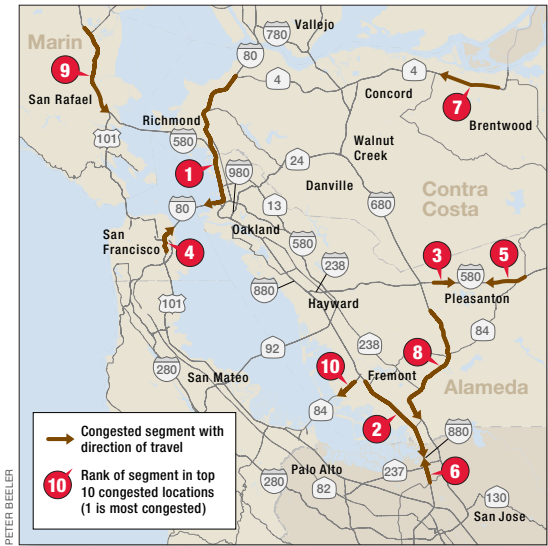
To register:

E-mail – gails@bayarea.net
(indicate LWVBA Forum in the subject line)

Phone – Gail Schickele 415.922.5826 or
League of Women Voters 510.839.1608

Facts & Figures

Bay Area Freeway Congestion Continues to Ease, but Hot Spots Persist



Bay Area freeways continued to flow more freely in 2002, as the sluggish Bay Area economy shed more jobs and fewer road warriors vied for roadway space during peak commute hours, a new report by MTC and Caltrans shows. The number of hours vehicles were delayed due to congestion dropped by 5 percent last year, after sliding 12 percent in 2001. Regionwide, vehicles spent 147,900 hours a day in congested conditions on Bay Area freeways in 2002, well below the 177,600 hours notched in 2000, at the high-water mark of the dot-com boom. But the relaxation in gridlock was not spread evenly: San Mateo County enjoyed

in the East Bay retained its notorious ranking as the No. 1 hot spot for the third year in a row, and the morning slog south on Interstate 880 through southern Alameda County took the No. 2 position for the second year in a row, there have been some significant realignments further down the list of the region's top 10 bottlenecks. Sliding down the list was the southbound morning commute along the Sunol Grade in the East Bay, thanks in part to a new auxiliary lane that opened in 2001 along this stretch of Interstate 680.

— Joe Curley

Excerpted from the 2003 State of the System Report. To order a copy, e-mail <library@mtc.ca.gov> or call 510.464.7836.

In Brief

Ex-MTC Chief Larry Dahms Scores National Award

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) inducted former MTC Executive Director Lawrence D. Dahms into the transit Hall of Fame at its annual meeting in late September.

One of the high points during Dahms' two-plus decades at MTC's helm — from 1977 to 2000 — was the Regional Rail Agreement that resulted in the new BART extension to San Francisco International Airport and several other major rail links.



Larry Dahms

He also held leadership positions with a number of prominent national transportation organizations and was instrumental in writing the landmark 1991 federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, also known as ISTEA.

Dahms joins the ranks of two other MTC-affiliated APTA Hall of Fame members: retired MTC Commissioner and former MTC Chair William R. "Bill" Lucius, and the late Miriam Gholikely, who served on three MTC advisory committees.

Top 10 Bay Area Congestion Hot Spots, 2002

2002 Rank	Location (numbers correspond to map)	2002 Daily Hours of Vehicle Delay*	2001 Rank
1	I-80, westbound, a.m. — Alameda/Contra Costa County: Willow Avenue to Bay Bridge metering lights	9,710	1
2	I-880, southbound, a.m. — Alameda County: Thornton Avenue (Route 84) to north of Dixon Landing Road	8,880	2
3	I-580, eastbound, p.m. — Alameda County: Hopyard Road to west of El Charro Road	7,040	5
4	I-80, eastbound and U.S. 101, northbound, p.m. — San Francisco: Cesar Chavez Street to west end of Bay Bridge	5,960	4
5	I-580, westbound, a.m. — Alameda County: Vasco Road to Airway Boulevard	3,910	12
6	Interstate 880, northbound, p.m. — Santa Clara County/Alameda County: Montague Expressway to Dixon Landing Road	3,660	7
7	Route 4, westbound, a.m. — Contra Costa County: Hillcrest Avenue to Loveridge Road	3,640	15
8	I-680, southbound, a.m. — Alameda County: Sunol Road to south of Mission Boulevard (Route 262)	3,600	3
9	U.S. 101, southbound, a.m. — Marin County: Rowland Boulevard to I-580	3,520	8
10	Route 84, westbound, a.m. — Alameda County: Newark Boulevard to Dumbarton Bridge toll plaza	2,860	10

Notes: Rankings are for routes in which continuous stop-and-go conditions occur with few, if any, breaks in the queue. Thus, corridors that have equally severe delays but where congestion is broken into several segments may rank lower in this type of congestion listing. Congestion is defined as average speeds below 35 miles per hour for 15 minutes or more. *Weekdays Source: Caltrans District 4

Freeway Delay by Bay Area County, 2002

	Freeway Miles	2001 Daily Hours of Vehicle Delay*	2002 Daily Hours of Vehicle Delay*	Percent Change 2001–2002
Alameda	138	65,600	61,300	–7%
Contra Costa	87	18,800	19,400	+3%
Marin	28	7,900	8,400	+6%
Napa	5	0	0	0%
San Francisco	19	8,500	11,400	+34%
San Mateo	73	10,900	7,700	–29%
Santa Clara	137	37,000	31,600	–15%
Solano	79	2,400	3,700	+54%
Sonoma	55	4,400	4,400	0%
Bay Area Totals	621	155,500	147,900	–5%

*Weekdays Source: Caltrans District 4

Pavement Software Debuts

City and county public works staff looking for the most cost-effective way to maintain and repair their streets and roads now have a new tool at their disposal: Upgraded and easier-to-use pavement management software has just been released by MTC.

Over 17 years of research and development have gone into StreetSaver™ version 8, incorporating feedback from users of previous versions of the software.

More than 100 jurisdictions in the Bay Area and 200 organizations outside the region currently use MTC's pavement management

software. Bay Area agencies and academic institutions pay \$1,500 for up to five users at the licensee's facility; the fee includes unlimited technical assistance, training and free workshops. Cities and counties outside the region, consultants, and private entities are charged somewhat more.

MTC is planning a StreetSaver™ Users Week November 13–17, 2003, with free workshops and computer training. For more information about the week or to purchase the software, go to <www.mtcpms.org> or e-mail <pavement@mtc.ca.gov>.



Commission Actions

September 2003

- Authorized Phase 2 of the TransLink® universal transit fare card program. The action allows MTC to proceed with installing TransLink® readers throughout the networks of six transit agencies that participated in the pilot program for the smart card. (See related story on page 1.)
- Adopted the General Aviation Update of the Regional Airport System Plan (general aviation refers to facilities serving noncommercial aircraft). The update calls on the interagency Regional Airport Planning Committee (which is sponsored by MTC) to take on a larger role with regard to ensuring compatible land uses in the vicinity of the Bay Area's general aviation airports — the goal being to minimize noise problems while enhancing safety. While runway space is adequate, the update acknowledges the need to plan for the growing demand for corporate aircraft facilities and services. (MTC Resolution 3603)

Update 2030

Transportation 2030 Outreach: Take the Budget Challenge

The fall outreach for the long-range Transportation 2030 Plan is in full swing, with MTC's standing committees and advisory committees considering a number of hot issues at their meetings in October and November. Meanwhile, MTC has enlisted community-based organizations to seek grassroots input via a series of workshops in October and November.

The public at large can continue to participate at MTC's interactive 2030 Plan Web site. A new online Budget Challenge gives players a sense of the difficult trade-offs confronting cash-strapped policy-makers.

For interactive features and updates on outreach, click on "Get Involved" at <www.mtc.ca.gov/T2030>.

Announcement

Advisory Panels Recruit

MTC continues to recruit for vacancies on the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee and the Minority Citizens Advisory Committee.

For detailed information and application forms, click on "Public Outreach" on the navigation bar at MTC's Web site: <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

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- Jon Rubin, Vice Chair
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Transactions

OCTOBER 2003

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